

GBF's SJRWP Issues/Questions for February 17, 2016 EPA Public Meeting
Version February 16, 2016

Gap/Deficiency Discovered in December 2015

1. Was the “gap/deficiency” a hole?
2. How long was it there?
3. Why did it occur? Was it always present? Was it the result of armoring sloughing off the slope? Was it possibly from a barge strike?
4. Is it possible that there are other similar issues/problems with the armored cap that are not visible to inspectors? What technology/methods are being prescribed by EPA to ensure that any problems can be discovered and addressed in a timely fashion?
5. What specific activities were undertaken to correct the “gap/deficiency?”
6. Was there a release of dioxin or other chemicals of potential concern from this “gap/deficiency” to the San Jacinto River waters, sediment or biota? Please describe the sampling and analysis that was done or will be done. What were the sampling results?

Regular and Post-Event Monitoring of the Cap

1. Will the cap monitoring plan be changed in response to the discovery of the December 2015 “gap/deficiency?”
2. Will the EPA consider changing the cap monitoring plan in response to the discovery of the erosion of rock in July 2011 that was thought to be caused by a *10-year rain event*? We note that current plan only calls for post-flood inspections to only occur after a *100-year rain event*.
3. Given the history of the cap with the 2011 rock erosion episode and the December 2015 “gap/deficiency”, its location adjacent to a barge fleeting facility and adjacent to a waterway with constant barge traffic, as well as being on a flood-prone river in a hurricane storm surge/hurricane wind driven wave zone, will the EPA consider requiring the PRPs to monitor the cap more frequently than semi-annually (through 2017) or annually (beginning in 2018)?
4. Can the EPA clarify if there will be triggers for other special post-event inspections, e.g., after tropical storm/hurricane, suspected barge strike, etc.? Would notices from members of the community trigger such a response from EPA? Or would it take the request of a government agency to trigger such a special inspection?

Effectiveness of the Cap/Studies of the Cap/Monitoring and Analysis in the Area of Concern

1. Has the EPA studied the effect of river or ground water moving into or out of the cap, e.g. as a result of river or tidal flows, has on its effectiveness?
2. Can you provide an update on any testing and results of the more recent river surface water quality, pore water sampling, and sediment? Are future such studies planned? If the scientific community concurs that additional dioxin studies would be helpful to determine the effects of SJRWP dioxin on Galveston Bay area human and environmental health, can the the EPA require the PRPs to fund dioxin finger printing?
3. Can the EPA require that the PRPs identify and sample all private water wells within at least a 1-mile radius of the site for dioxin and other chemicals of potential concern? Given the concerns that the community has about private well water quality, sampling results from this broader area may answer area residents’ questions/concerns about the waste pits effects on human and animal health and answer the question of if chemicals of potential concern are from background sources or perhaps from the pit itself. We ask this because we believe that water well sampling for



dioxin has only occurred in the immediate area of the pits, rather than in a more comprehensive manner.

4. Given the seafood consumption advisories in the Galveston Bay Estuary due to the presence of dioxin in fish and crab tissue, and given the absence of funding for the Texas Department of State Health Services to perform regular seafood tissue sampling, can the EPA require the PRPs be required to fund such sampling and analysis in the SJRWP area of concern (and preferably beyond the area of concern - both upstream and downstream in the San Jacinto River and the Houston Ship Channel)?

EPA Communications to the Community

1. Can you let us know if the EPA has finalized the draft 2011 Community Involvement Plan (CIP)? If so, can it be placed on the EPA SJRWP website? If not, what is the schedule for its completion?
2. Can the EPA confirm the schedule for Community Awareness Committee meetings? Going forward, are they to be quarterly or are they to be held as needed? We note that the draft CIP lists both frequencies.

The Superfund Cleanup Schedule, Process and Success Criteria

1. Can you tell us the tentative schedule for the release of the final Corps of Engineers third party review of the feasibility study and clean up alternatives? GBF had many comments, concerns and questions on the Corps draft study, which we submitted via letter to EPA in September 2015 (see attached). Other entities, covering a broad spectrum of interests, including the Port of Houston Authority, Harris County, San Jacinto River Coalition, and the Sierra Club also shared many of our same concerns as well as other concerns of their own. Will these concerns be addressed in the final Corps study?
2. Can the EPA provide an updated schedule on the delivery of the final feasibility study (FS) and proposed plan for clean up?
3. Will the final feasibility study address our comments on the draft Corps study and the draft FS as noted in our July 2014 comment letter (attached) and our September 2015 comment letter (attached)? Most notably (but not our only comment), will the final FS include a full removal option that includes best management practices (BMPs), e.g. the use of berms and/or sheet piles, to prevent the release of dioxins and other chemicals of potential concern? Will the PRPs risk analysis take into account a full removal option with such BMPs? Will the final FS include other items such as the modeling of hurricane storm surge or wind-driven waves, the effects of barge tow prop wash, etc.?
4. Can the EPA clarify to what clean up standard will the selected remedy will meet? Will it be:
 - a. A residential land use standard?
 - b. An industrial land use standard?
 - c. A site-specific standard?

What will the resulting dioxin concentration standard be? We note that land use in the area of concern includes residential and that activities in the area include both recreational and commercial fishing, as well as suspected subsistence fishing. Will the human health risk analysis, account for the suspected presence of subsistence fishing in the area, as noted in our October 2015 letter to the EPA (see attached)?